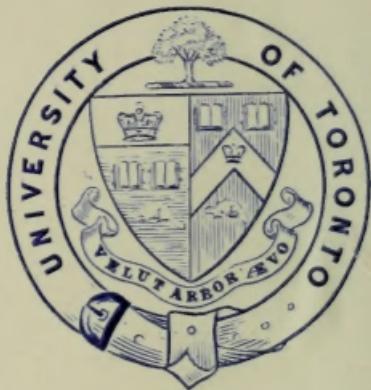


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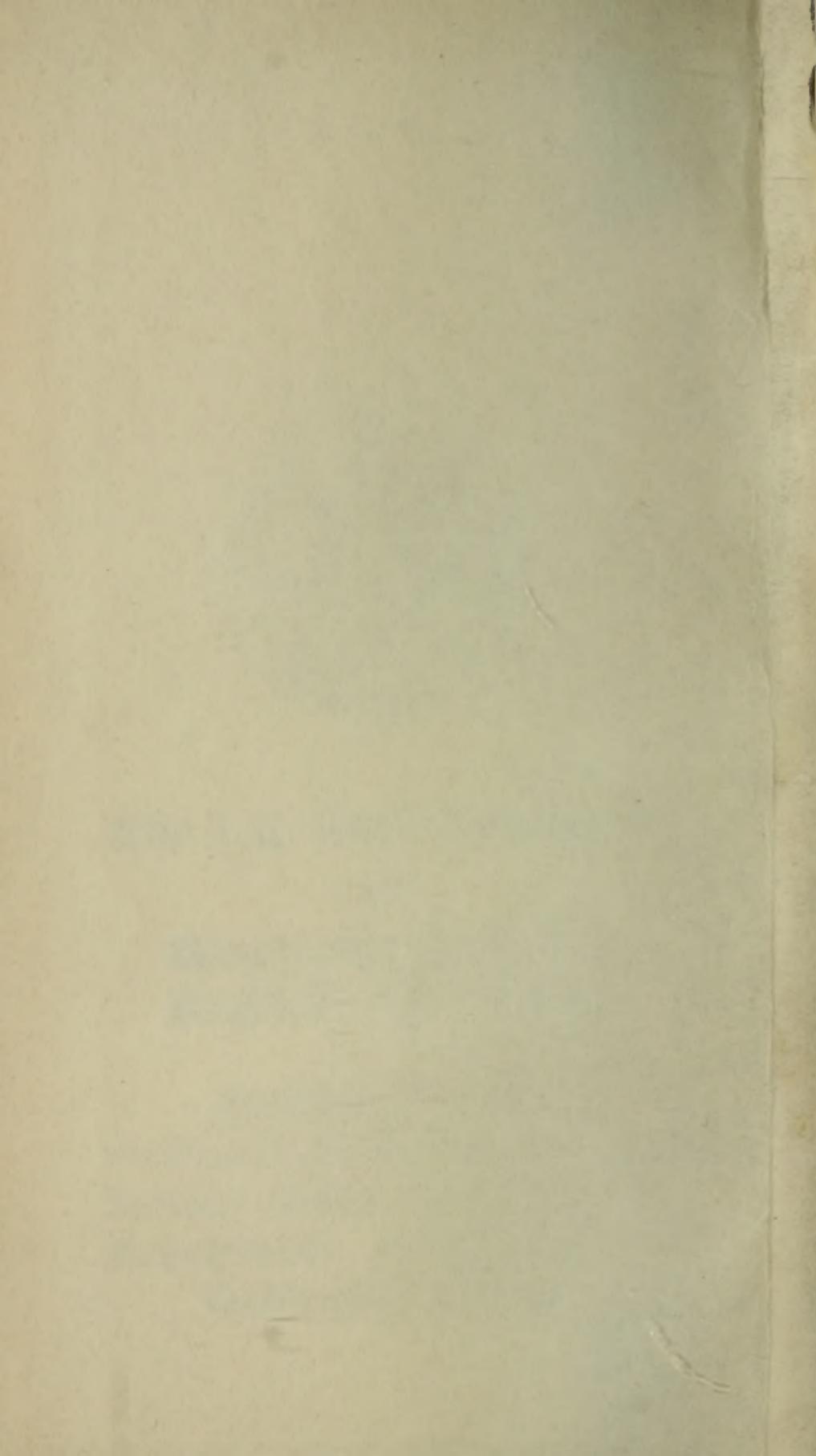
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# SELECTIONS *from* TENNYSON

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SELF-EDUCATION  
BY  
THOMAS  
DE MULIER  
A.M.



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## SELECTIONS FROM TENNYSON

### TO THE QUEEN

REVERED, beloved—O you that hold  
A nobler office upon earth  
Than arms, or power of brain, or birth  
Could give the warrior kings of old,

Victoria,—since your Royal grace  
To one of less desert allows  
This laurel greener from the brows  
Of him that utter'd nothing base;

And should your greatness, and the care  
That yokes with empire, yield you time  
To make demand of modern rhyme  
If aught of ancient worth be there;

Then—while a sweeter music wakes,  
And thro' wild March the throstle calls,  
Where all about your palace-walls  
The sun-lit almond-blossom shakes—

Take, Madam, this poor book of song ;  
For tho' the faults were thick as dust  
In vacant chambers, I could trust  
Your kindness. May you rule us long,

And leave us rulers of your blood  
As noble till the latest day !  
May children of our children say,  
' She wrought her people lasting good ;

' Her court was pure ; her life serene ;  
God gave her peace ; her land repos'd ;  
A thousand claims to reverence closed  
In her as Mother, Wife, and Queen ;

' And statesmen at her council met  
Who knew the seasons when to take  
Occasion by the hand, and make  
The bounds of freedom wider yet

' By shaping some august decree,  
Which kept her throne unshaken still,  
Broad-based upon her people's will,  
And compass'd by the inviolate sea.'

## MARIANA

*'Mariana in the moated grange.'—Measure for Measure.*

WITH blackest moss the flower-plots  
Were thickly crusted, one and all :  
The rusted nails fell from the knots  
That held the peach to the garden-wall.  
The broken sheds look'd sad and strange :  
Unlifted was the clinking latch ;  
Weeded and worn the ancient thatch  
Upon the lonely moated grange.

She only said, ' My life is dreary,  
He cometh not,' she said ;  
She said, ' I am aweary, aweary,  
I would that I were dead ! '

Her tears fell with the dews at even ;  
Her tears fell ere the dews were dried ;  
She could not look on the sweet heaven,  
Either at morn or eventide.

After the flitting of the bats,  
When thickest dark did trance the sky,  
She drew her casement-curtain by,  
And glanced athwart the glooming flats.  
She only said, ' The night is dreary,  
He cometh not,' she said ;  
She said, ' I am aweary, aweary,  
I would that I were dead ! '

Upon the middle of the night,  
 Waking she heard the night-fowl crow :  
 The cock sung out an hour ere light :  
 From the dark fen the oxen's low  
 Came to her : without hope of change,  
 In sleep she seem'd to walk forlorn,  
 Till cold winds woke the grey-eyed morn  
 About the lonely moated grange.  
 She only said, ' The day is dreary,  
 He cometh not,' she said ;  
 She said, ' I am aweary, aweary,  
 I would that I were dead ! '

About a stone-cast from the wall  
 A sluice with blacken'd waters slept,  
 And o'er it many, round and small,  
 The cluster'd marish-mosses crept.  
 Hard by a poplar shook alway,  
 All silver-green with gnarled bark :  
 For leagues no other tree did mark  
 The level waste, the rounding grey.  
 She only said, ' My life is dreary,  
 He cometh not,' she said ;  
 She said, ' I am aweary, aweary,  
 I would that I were dead ! '

And ever when the moon was low,  
 And the shrill winds were up and away,  
 In the white curtain, to and fro,  
 She saw the gusty shadow sway.

But when the moon was very low,  
And wild winds bound within their cell,  
The shadow of the poplar fell  
Upon her bed, across her brow.

She only said, 'The night is dreary,  
He cometh not,' she said ;  
She said, 'I am aweary, aweary,  
I would that I were dead !'

All day within the dreamy house,  
The doors upon their hinges creak'd ;  
The blue fly sung in the pane ; the mouse  
Behind the mouldering wainscot shriek'd,  
Or from the crevice peer'd about.

Old faces glimmer'd thro' the doors,  
Old footsteps trod the upper floors,  
Old voices called her from without.

She only said, 'My life is dreary,  
He cometh not,' she said ;  
She said, 'I am aweary, aweary,  
I would that I were dead !'

The sparrow's chirrup on the roof,  
The slow clock ticking, and the sound  
Which to the wooing wind aloof  
The poplar made, did all confound  
Her sense ; but most she loathed the hour  
When the thick-moted sunbeam lay  
Athwart the chambers, and the day  
Was sloping toward his western bower.

Then, said she, 'I am very dreary,  
He will not come,' she said ;  
She wept, 'I am aweary, aweary,  
Oh God, that I were dead !'

## THE DYING SWAN

## I

THE plain was grassy, wild and bare,  
Wide, wild, and open to the air,  
Which had built up everywhere  
An under-roof of doleful grey.  
With an inner voice the river ran,  
Adown it floated a dying swan,  
And loudly did lament.  
It was the middle of the day.  
Ever the weary wind went on,  
And took the reed-tops as it went.

## II

Some blue peaks in the distance rose,  
And white against the cold-white sky,  
Shone out their crowning snows.  
One willow over the river wept,  
And shook the wave as the wind did sigh ;  
Above in the wind was the swallow,

Chasing itself at its own wild will,  
And far thro' the marish green and still  
The tangled water-courses slept,  
Shot over with purple, and green, and yellow.

## III

The wild swan's death-hymn took the soul  
Of that waste place with joy  
Hidden in sorrow: at first to the ear  
The warble was low, and full and clear;  
And floating about the under-sky,  
Prevailing in weakness, the coronach stole  
Sometimes afar, and sometimes anear;  
But anon her awful jubilant voice,  
With a music strange and manifold,  
Flow'd forth on a carol free and bold;  
As when a mighty people rejoice  
With shawms, and with cymbals, and harps of gold,  
And the tumult of their acclaim is roll'd  
Thro' the open gates of the city afar,  
To the shepherd who watches the evening star.  
And the creeping mosses and clambering weeds,  
And the willow-branches hoar and dank,  
And the wavy swell of the southing reeds,  
And the wave-worn horns of the echoing bank,  
And the silvery marish-flowers that throng  
The desolate creeks and pools among,  
Were flooded over with eddying song.

## SONNET

BUT were I loved, as I desire to be,  
What is there in the great sphere of the earth,  
And range of evil between death and birth,  
That I should fear,—if I were loved by thee?  
All the inner, all the outer world of pain  
Clear Love would pierce and cleave, if thou wert  
mine,  
As I have heard that, somewhere in the main,  
Fresh-water springs come up thro' bitter brine.  
'Twere joy, not fear, clasp'd hand-in-hand with  
thee,  
To wait for death—mute—careless of all ills,  
Apart upon a mountain, tho' the surge  
Of some new deluge from a thousand hills  
Flung leagues of roaring foam into the gorge  
Below us, as far on as eye could see.

## THE LADY OF SHALOTT

## PART I

ON either side the river lie  
Long fields of barley and of rye,  
That clothe the wold and meet the sky ;  
And thro' the field the road runs by  
To many-tower'd Camelot ;

And up and down the people go,  
Gazing where the lilies blow  
Round an island there below,  
    The island of Shalott.

Willows whiten, aspens quiver,  
Little breezes dusk and shiver  
Thro' the wave that runs for ever  
By the island in the river

    Flowing down to Camelot.

Four grey walls, and four grey towers,  
Overlook a space of flowers,  
And the silent isle embowers

    The Lady of Shalott.

By the margin, willow-veil'd,  
Slide the heavy barges trail'd  
By slow horses ; and unhail'd  
The shallop fitteth silken-sail'd

    Skimming down to Camelot :

But who hath seen her wave her hand ?  
Or at the casement seen her stand ?  
Or is she known in all the land,

    The Lady of Shalott ?

Only reapers, reaping early  
In among the bearded barley,  
Hear a song that echoes cheerly  
From the river winding clearly,

    Down to tower'd Camelot :

And by the moon the reaper weary,  
 Piling sheaves in uplands airy,  
 Listening, whispers ' 'Tis the fairy  
 Lady of Shalott.'

## PART II

THERE she weaves by night and day  
 A magic web with colours gay.  
 She has heard a whisper say,  
 A curse is on her if she stay

To look down to Camelot.

She knows not what the curse may be,  
 And so she weaveth steadily,  
 And little other care hath she,  
 The Lady of Shalott.

And moving thro' a mirror clear  
 That hangs before her all the year,  
 Shadows of the world appear.  
 There she sees the highway near  
 Winding down to Camelot:  
 There the river eddy whirls,  
 And there the surly village-churls,  
 And the red cloaks of market girls,  
 Pass onward from Shalott.

Sometimes a troop of damsels glad,  
 An abbot on an ambling pad,

Sometimes a curly shepherd-lad,  
Or long-hair'd page in crimson clad,

Goes by to tower'd Camelot;

And sometimes thro' the mirror blue  
The knights come riding two and two:  
She hath no loyal knight and true,

The Lady of Shalott.

But in her web she still delights  
To weave the mirror's magic sights,  
For often thro' the silent nights  
A funeral, with plumes and lights,

And music, went to Camelot:

Or when the moon was overhead,  
Came two young lovers lately wed;  
'I am half sick of shadows,' said

The Lady of Shalott.

### PART III

A bow-shot from her bower-eaves,  
He rode between the barley-sheaves,  
The sun came dazzling thro' the leaves,  
And flamed upon the brazen greaves  
Of bold Sir Lancelot.

A red-cross knight for ever kneel'd  
To a lady in his shield,  
That sparkled on the yellow field,  
Beside remote Shalott.

The gemmy bridle glitter'd free,  
Like to some branch of stars we see  
Hung in the golden Galaxy.  
The bridle bells rang merrily

As he rode down to Camelot :

And from his blazon'd baldric slung  
A mighty silver bugle hung,  
And as he rode his armour rung,

Beside remote Shalott.

All in the blue unclouded weather  
Thick-jewell'd shone the saddle-leather,  
The helmet and the helmet-feather  
Burn'd like one burning flame together,

As he rode down to Camelot.

As often thro' the purple night,  
Below the starry clusters bright,  
Some bearded meteor, trailing light,

Moves over still Shalott.

His broad clear brow in sunlight glowed ;  
On burnish'd hooves his war-horse trode ;  
From underneath his helmet flow'd  
His coal-black curls as on he rode,

As he rode down to Camelot.

From the bank and from the river  
He flashed into the crystal mirror,  
'Tirra lirra,' by the river

Sang Sir Lancelot.

She left her web, she left the loom,  
She made three paces thro' the room,  
She saw the water-lily bloom,  
She saw the helmet and the plume,  
She look'd down to Camelot.  
Out flew the web and floated wide ;  
The mirror cracked from side to side ;  
'The curse is come upon me,' cried  
The Lady of Shalott.

## PART IV

IN the stormy east-wind straining,  
The pale yellow woods were waning,  
The broad stream in his banks complaining,  
Heavily the low sky raining  
Over tower'd Camelot ;  
Down she came and found a boat  
Beneath a willow left afloat,  
And round about the prow she wrote  
*The Lady of Shalott.*

And down the river's dim expanse—  
Like some bold seër in a trance,  
Seeing all his own mischance—  
With a glassy countenance  
Did she look to Camelot.  
And at the closing of the day  
She loosed the chain, and down she lay ;  
The broad stream bore her far away,  
The Lady of Shalott.

Lying, robed in snowy white  
That loosely flew to left and right—  
The leaves upon her falling light—  
Thro' the noises of the night

She floated down to Camelot :  
And as the boat-head wound along  
The willowy hills and fields among,  
They heard her singing her last song,  
The Lady of Shalott.

Heard a carol, mournful, holy,  
Chanted loudly, chanted lowly,  
Till her blood was frozen slowly,  
And her eyes were darken'd wholly,  
Turned to tower'd Camelot ;  
For ere she reach'd upon the tide  
The first house by the water-side,  
Singing in her song she died,  
The Lady of Shalott.

Under tower and balcony,  
By garden-wall and gallery,  
A gleaming shape she floated by,  
Dead-pale between the houses high,  
Silent into Camelot.

Out upon the wharfs they came,  
Knight and burgher, lord and dame,  
And round the prow they read her name,  
*The Lady of Shalott.*

Who is this? and what is here?  
And in the lighted palace near  
Died the sound of royal cheer;  
And they cross'd themselves for fear,  
    All the knights at Camelot:  
But Lancelot mused a little space;  
He said, 'She has a lovely face;  
God in his mercy lend her grace,  
    The Lady of Shalott.'

## THE MILLER'S DAUGHTER

IT is the miller's daughter,  
    And she is grown so dear, so dear,  
That I would be the jewel  
    That trembles at her ear:  
For hid in ringlets day and night,  
I'd touch her neck so warm and white.

And I would be the girdle  
    About her dainty dainty waist,  
And her heart would beat against me,  
    In sorrow and in rest:  
And I should know if it beat right,  
I'd clasp it round so close and tight.

And I would be the necklace,  
 And all day long to fall and rise  
 Upon her balmy bosom,  
 With her laughter or her sighs,  
 And I would lie so light, so light,  
 I scarce should be unclasp'd at night.

## ŒNONE

‘O MOTHER Ida, many-fountain’d Ida,  
 Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.  
 I waited underneath the dawning hills,  
 Aloft the mountain lawn was dewy-dark,  
 And dewy-dark aloft the mountain pine :  
 Beautiful Paris, evil-hearted Paris,  
 Leading a jet-black goat white-horn’d, white-  
 hooved,  
 Came up from reedy Simois all alone.

‘O mother Ida, harken ere I die.  
 Far off the torrent call’d me from the cleft :  
 Far up the solitary morning smote  
 The streaks of virgin snow. With down-dropt  
 eyes  
 I sat alone : white-breasted like a star  
 Fronting the dawn he moved ; a leopard skin  
 Droop’d from his shoulder, but his sunny hair

luster'd about his temples like a God's;  
 And his cheek brighten'd as the foam-bow  
 brightens  
 When the wind blows the foam, and all my heart  
 Vent forth to embrace him coming ere he came.

'Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.  
 He smiled, and opening out his milk-white palm  
 Disclosed a fruit of pure Hesperian gold,  
 That smelt ambrosially, and while I look'd  
 And listen'd, the full-flowing river of speech  
 Came down upon my heart.

"My own Œnone,  
 Beautiful-brow'd Œnone, my own soul,  
 Behold this fruit, whose gleaming rind engrav'n  
 For the most fair, would seem to award it thine,  
 Is lovelier than whatever Oread haunt  
 The knolls of Ida, loveliest in all grace  
 Of movement, and the charm of married brows."

'Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.  
 He prest the blossom of his lips to mine,  
 And added "This was cast upon the board,  
 When all the full-faced presence of the Gods  
 Ranged in the halls of Peleus; whereupon  
 Rose feud, with question unto whom 'twere due:  
 But light-foot Iris brought it yester-eve,  
 Delivering, that to me, by common voice  
 Elected umpire, Herè comes to-day,

Pallas and Aphrodite, claiming each  
 This meed of fairest. Thou, within the cave  
 Behind yon whispering tuft of oldest pine,  
 Mayst well behold them unbeheld, unheard  
 Hear all, and see thy Paris judge of Gods."

‘Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.  
 It was the deep midnoon : one silvery cloud  
 Had lost his way between the piney sides  
 Of this long glen. Then to the bower they came,  
 Naked they came to that smooth-swarded bower,  
 And at their feet the crocus brake like fire,  
 Violet, amaracus, and asphodel,  
 Lotos and lilies : and a wind arose,  
 And overhead the wandering ivy and vine,  
 This way and that, in many a wild festoon  
 Ran riot, garlanding the gnarled boughs  
 With bunch and berry and flower thro’ and thro’.

‘O mother Ida, harken ere I die.  
 On the tree-tops a crested peacock lit,  
 And o’er him flow’d a golden cloud, and lean’d  
 Upon him, slowly dropping fragrant dew.  
 Then first I heard the voice of her, to whom  
 Coming thro’ Heaven, like a light that grows  
 Larger and clearer, with one mind the Gods  
 Rise up for reverence. She to Paris made  
 Proffer of royal power, ample rule  
 Unquestion’d, overflowing revenue  
 Wherewith to embellish state, “ from many a vale

And river-sunder'd champaign clothed with corn,  
Or labour'd mines undrainable of ore.

Honour," she said, "and homage, tax and toll,  
From many an inland town and haven large,  
Mast-throng'd beneath her shadowing citadel  
In glassy bays among her tallest towers."

‘O mother Ida, harken ere I die.  
Still she spake on and still she spake of power,  
“ Which in all action is the end of all ;  
Power fitted to the season ; wisdom-bred  
And throned of wisdom—from all neighbour crowns  
Alliance and allegiance, till thy hand  
Fail from the sceptre-staff. Such boon from me,  
From me, Heaven’s Queen, Paris, to thee king-  
born,  
A shepherd all thy life but yet king-born,  
Should come most welcome, seeing men, in power  
Only, are likest gods, who have attain’d  
Rest in a happy place and quiet seats  
Above the thunder, with undying bliss  
In knowledge of their own supremacy.”

‘Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.  
She ceased, and Paris held the costly fruit  
Out at arm’s-length, so much the thought of  
power  
Flatter’d his spirit ; but Pallas where she stood  
Somewhat apart, her clear and bared limbs  
O’erthwarted with the brazen-headed spear

Upon her pearly shoulder leaning cold,  
 The while, above, her full and earnest eye  
 Over her snow-cold breast and angry cheek  
 Keep watch, waiting decision, made reply.

““Self-reverence, self-knowledge, self-control,  
 These three alone lead life to sovereign power.  
 Yet not for power (power of herself  
 Would come uncall’d for), but to live by law,  
 Acting the law we live by without fear ;  
 And, because right is right, to follow right  
 Were wisdom in the scorn of consequence.””

‘ Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.  
 Again she said : “ I woo thee not with gifts.  
 Sequel of guerdon could not alter me  
 To fairer. Judge thou me by what I am,  
 So shalt thou find me fairest.

Yet, indeed,

If gazing on divinity disrobed  
 Thy mortal eyes are frail to judge of fair,  
 Unbiass’d by self-profit, oh ! rest thee sure  
 That I shall love thee well and cleave to thee,  
 So that my vigour, wedded to thy blood,  
 Shall strike within thy pulses, like a God’s,  
 To push thee forward thro’ a life of shocks,  
 Dangers, and deeds, until endurance grow  
 Sinew’d with action, and the full-grown will,  
 Circled thro’ all experiences, pure law,  
 Commeasure perfect freedom.”

‘Here she ceased,  
And Paris ponder’d, and I cried, “O Paris,  
Give it to Pallas!” but he heard me not,  
Or hearing would not hear me, woe is me!

‘O mother Ida, many-fountain’d Ida,  
Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.  
Idalian Aphrodite beautiful,  
Fresh as the foam, new-bathed in Paphian wells,  
With rosy slender fingers backward drew  
From her warm brows and bosom her deep hair  
Ambrosial, golden round her lucid throat  
And shoulder: from the violets her light foot  
Shone rosy-white, and o’er her rounded form  
Between the shadows of the vine-bunches  
Floated the glowing sunlights, as she moved.

‘Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.  
She with a subtle smile in her mild eyes,  
The herald of her triumph, drawing nigh  
Half-whisper’d in his ear, “I promise thee  
The fairest and most loving wife in Greece.”  
She spoke and laugh’d: I shut my sight for fear:  
But when I look’d, Paris had raised his arm,  
And I beheld great Herè’s angry eyes,  
As she withdrew into the golden cloud,  
And I was left alone within the bower;  
And from that time to this I am alone,  
And I shall be alone until I die.’

## THE MAY QUEEN

## I

You must wake and call me early, call me early,  
mother dear;  
To-morrow 'ill be the happiest time of all the glad  
New-year;  
Of all the glad New-year, mother, the maddest  
merriest day;  
For I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to  
be Queen o' the May.

There's many a black black eye, they say, but  
none so bright as mine;  
There's Margaret and Mary, there's Kate and  
Caroline:  
But none so fair as little Alice in all the land they  
say,  
So I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to  
be Queen o' the May.

I sleep so sound all night, mother, that I shall  
never wake,  
If you do not call me loud when the day begins  
to break:  
But I must gather knots of flowers, and buds and  
garlands gay,  
For I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to  
be Queen o' the May.

As I came up the valley whom think ye should  
I see,

But Robin leaning on the bridge beneath the  
hazel-tree?

He thought of that sharp look, mother, I gave  
him yesterday,—

But I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to  
be Queen o' the May.

He thought I was a ghost, mother, for I was all in  
white,

And I ran by him without speaking, like a flash of  
light.

They call me cruel-hearted, but I care not what  
they say,

For I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to  
be Queen o' the May.

They say he's dying all for love, but that can  
never be:

They say his heart is breaking, mother—what is  
that to me?

There's many a bolder lad 'ill woo me any summer  
day,

And I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to  
be Queen o' the May.

Little Effie shall go with me to-morrow to the  
green,

And you'll be there, too, mother, to see me made  
the Queen;

For the shepherd lads on every side 'ill come from  
far away,

And I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to  
be Queen o' the May.

The honeysuckle round the porch has wov'n its  
wavy bowers,

And by the meadow-trenches blow the faint sweet  
cuckoo-flowers;

And the wild marsh-marigold shines like fire in  
swamps and hollows gray,

And I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to  
be Queen o' the May.

The night-winds come and go, mother, upon the  
meadow-grass,

And the happy stars above them seem to brighten  
as they pass;

There will not be a drop of rain the whole of the  
livelong day,

And I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to  
be Queen o' the May.

All the valley, mother, 'ill be fresh and green and  
still,

And the cowslip and the crowfoot are over all the  
hill,

And the rivulet in the flowery dale 'ill merrily  
glance and play,

For I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to  
be Queen o' the May.

So you must wake and call me early, call me early,  
mother dear,  
To-morrow 'ill be the happiest time of all the glad  
New-year :  
To-morrow 'ill be of all the year the maddest  
merriest day,  
For I 'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I 'm to  
be Queen o' the May.

## II. NEW YEAR'S EVE

If you 're waking call me early, call me early,  
mother dear,  
For I would see the sun rise upon the glad New-  
year.  
It is the last New-year that I shall ever see,  
Then you may lay me low i' the mould and think  
no more of me.

To-night I saw the sun set : he set and left behind  
The good old year, the dear old time, and all my  
peace of mind ;  
And the New-year's coming up, mother, but I shall  
never see  
The blossom on the blackthorn, the leaf upon the  
tree.

Last May we made a crown of flowers : we had a  
merry day ;  
Beneath the hawthorn on the green they made  
me Queen of May ;

And we danced about the may-pole and in the  
hazel copse,  
Till Charles's Wain came out above the tall white  
chimney-tops.

There's not a flower on all the hills: the frost is  
on the pane:  
I only wish to live till the snowdrops come  
again:  
I wish the snow would melt and the sun come out  
on high:  
I long to see a flower so before the day I die.

The building rook 'ill caw from the windy tall  
elm-tree,  
And the tufted plover pipe along the fallow  
lea,  
And the swallow 'ill come back again with summer  
o'er the wave,  
But I shall lie alone, mother, within the moulder-  
ing grave.

Upon the chancel-casement, and upon that grave  
of mine,  
In the early early morning the summer sun 'ill  
shine,  
Before the red cock crows from the farm upon  
the hill,  
When you are warm-asleep, mother, and all the  
world is still,

When the flowers come again, mother, beneath  
the waning light

You'll never see me more in the long grey fields  
at night;

When from the dry dark wold the summer airs  
blow cool

On the oat-grass and the sword-grass, and the  
bulrush in the pool.

You'll bury me, my mother, just beneath the  
hawthorn shade,

And you'll come sometimes and see me where I  
am lowly laid.

I shall not forget you, mother, I shall hear you  
when you pass,

With your feet above my head in the long and  
pleasant grass.

I have been wild and wayward, but you'll forgive  
me now;

You'll kiss me, my own mother, and forgive me  
ere I go;

Nay, nay, you must not weep, nor let your grief  
be wild,

You should not fret for me, mother, you have  
another child.

If I can I'll come again, mother, from out my  
resting-place;

Tho' you'll not see me, mother, I shall look upon  
your face;

Tho' I cannot speak a word, I shall harken what  
you say,  
And be often, often with you when you think I'm  
far away.

Good-night, good-night, when I have said good-  
night for evermore,  
And you see me carried out from the threshold of  
the door;  
Don't let Effie come to see me till my grave be  
growing green:  
She'll be a better child to you than ever I have  
been.

She'll find my garden-tools upon the granary  
floor:  
Let her take 'em: they are hers: I shall never  
garden more:  
But tell her, when I'm gone, to train the rose-  
bush that I set  
About the parlour-window and the box of  
mignonette.

Good-night, sweet mother: call me before the  
day is born.  
All night I lie awake, but I fall asleep at morn;  
But I would see the sun rise upon the glad New-  
year,  
So, if you're waking, call me, call me early,  
mother dear.

## III. CONCLUSION

I THOUGHT to pass away before, and yet alive  
I am;

And in the fields all round I hear the bleating of  
the lamb.

How sadly, I remember, rose the morning of the  
year!

To die before the snowdrop came, and now the  
violet's here. .

O sweet is the new violet, that comes beneath the  
skies,

And sweeter is the young lamb's voice to me that  
cannot rise,

And sweet is all the land about, and ail the  
flowers that blow,

And sweeter far is death than life to me that long  
to go.

It seem'd so hard at first, mother, to leave the  
blessed sun,

And now it seems as hard to stay, and yet His  
will be done!

But still I think it can't be long before I find  
release;

And that good man, the clergyman, has told me  
words of peace.

O blessings on his kindly voice and on his silver hair !

And blessings on his whole life long, until he meet me there !

O blessings on his kindly heart and on his silver head !

A thousand times I blest him, as he knelt beside my bed.

He taught me all the mercy, for he show'd me all the sin.

Now, tho' my lamp was lighted late, there's One will let me in :

Nor would I now be well, mother, again, if that could be,

For my desire is but to pass to Him that died for me.

I did not hear the dog howl, mother, or the death-watch beat,

There came a sweeter token when the night and morning meet :

But sit beside my bed, mother, and put your hand in mine,

And Effie on the other side, and I will tell the sign.

All in the wild March-morning I heard the angels call ;

It was when the moon was setting, and the dark was over all ;

The trees began to whisper, and the wind began  
to roll,

And in the wild March-morning I heard them call  
my soul.

For lying broad awake I thought of you and Effie  
dear;

I saw you sitting in the house, and I no longer  
here;

With all my strength I pray'd for both, and so I  
felt resign'd,

And up the valley came a swell of music on the  
wind.

I thought that it was fancy, and I listen'd in my  
bed,

And then did something speak to me—I know  
not what was said;

For great delight and shuddering took hold of all  
my mind,

And up the valley came again the music on the  
wind.

But you were sleeping; and I said, 'It's not for  
them: it's mine.'

And if it comes three times, I thought, I take it  
for a sign.

And once again it came, and close beside the  
window-bars,

Then seemed to go right up to Heaven and die  
among the stars.

So now I think my time is near. I trust it is. I  
know

The blessed music went that way my soul will  
have to go.

And for myself, indeed, I care not if I go to-day.  
But, Effie, you must comfort *her* when I am past  
away.

And say to Robin a kind word, and tell him not  
to fret;

There's many worthier than I, would make him  
happy yet.

If I had lived—I cannot tell—I might have been  
his wife;

But all these things have ceased to be, with my  
desire of life.

O look! the sun begins to rise, the heavens are in  
a glow;

He shines upon a hundred fields, and all of them  
I know.

And there I move no longer now, and there his  
light may shine—

Wild flowers in the valley for other hands than  
mine.

O sweet and strange it seems to me, that ere this  
day is done

The voice, that now is speaking, may be beyond  
the sun—

'or ever and for ever with those just souls and  
true—

And what is life, that we should moan? why  
make we such ado?

'or ever and for ever, all in a blessed home—

And there to wait a little while till you and Effie  
come—

'o lie within the light of God, as I lie upon your  
breast—

And the wicked cease from troubling, and the  
weary are at rest.

### CHORIC SONG FROM THE LOTOS-EATERS

#### I

THERE is sweet music here that softer falls  
Than petals from blown roses on the grass,  
Or night-dews on still waters between walls  
Of shadowy granite, in a gleaming pass;  
Music that gentlier on the spirit lies,  
Than tir'd eyelids upon tir'd eyes;  
Music that brings sweet sleep down from the  
blissful skies.

Here are cool mosses deep,  
And thro' the moss the ivies creep,

And in the stream the long-leaved flowers weep,  
And from the craggy ledge the poppy hangs in  
sleep.

## II

Why are we weigh'd upon with heaviness,  
And utterly consumed with sharp distress,  
While all things else have rest from weariness?  
All things have rest: why should we toil alone,  
We only toil, who are the first of things,  
And make perpetual moan,  
Still from one sorrow to another thrown:  
Nor ever fold our wings,  
And cease from wanderings,  
Nor steep our brows in slumber's holy balm;  
Nor harken what the inner spirit sings,  
'There is no joy but calm!'  
Why should we only toil, the roof and crown of  
things?

## III

Lo! in the middle of the wood,  
The folded leaf is woo'd from out the bud  
With winds upon the branch, and there  
Grows green and broad, and takes no care,  
Sun-steep'd at noon, and in the moon  
Nightly dew-fed; and turning yellow  
Falls, and floats adown the air.  
Lo! sweetened with the summer light,  
The full-juiced apple, waxing over-mellow,  
Drops in a silent autumn night.

All its allotted length of days,  
The flower ripens in its place,  
Ripens and fades, and falls, and hath no toil,  
Fast-rooted in the fruitful soil.

## IV

Hateful is the dark-blue sky,  
Vaulted o'er the dark-blue sea.  
Death is the end of life ; ah, why  
Should life all labour be ?  
Let us alone. Time driveth onward fast,  
And in a little while our lips are dumb.  
Let us alone. What is it that will last ?  
All things are taken from us, and become  
Portions and parcels of the dreadful Past.  
Let us alone. What pleasure can we have  
To war with evil ? Is there any peace  
In ever climbing up the climbing wave ?  
All things have rest, and ripen toward the grave  
In silence ; ripen, fall and cease :  
Give us long rest or death, dark death, or dream-  
ful ease.

## V

How sweet it were, hearing the downward stream,  
With half-shut eyes ever to seem  
Falling asleep in a half-dream !  
To dream and dream, like yonder amber light,  
Which will not leave the myrrh-bush on the  
height ;

To hear each other's whispered speech ;  
Eating the Lotos day by day,  
To watch the crisping ripples on the beach,  
And tender curving lines of creamy spray ;  
To lend our hearts and spirits wholly  
To the influence of mild-minded melancholy ;  
To muse and brood and live again in memory,  
With those old faces of our infancy  
Heap'd over with a mound of grass,  
Two handfuls of white dust, shut in an urn of  
brass !

## VI

Dear is the memory of our wedded lives,  
And dear the last embraces of our wives  
And their warm tears : but all hath suffer'd  
change ;  
For surely now our household hearths are cold :  
Our sons inherit us : our looks are strange :  
And we should come like ghosts to trouble joy.  
Or else the island princes over-bold  
Have eat our substance, and the minstrel sings  
Before them of the ten-years' war in Troy,  
And our great deeds, as half-forgotten things.  
Is there confusion in the little isle ?  
Let what is broken so remain.  
The Gods are hard to reconcile :  
'Tis hard to settle order once again.  
There *is* confusion worse than death,  
Trouble on trouble, pain on pain,

Long labour unto aged breath,  
Sore task to hearts worn out with many wars  
And eyes grown dim with gazing on the pilot-stars.

## VII

But, propt on beds of amaranth and moly,  
How sweet (while warm airs lull us, blowing  
lowly)  
With half-dropt eyelids still,  
Beneath a heaven dark and holy,  
To watch the long bright river drawing slowly  
His waters from the purple hill—  
To hear the dewy echoes calling  
From cave to cave thro' the thick-twined vine—  
To watch the emerald-coloured water falling  
Thro' many a wov'n acanthus-wreath divine !  
Only to hear and see the far-off sparkling brine,  
Only to hear were sweet, stretch'd out beneath  
the pine.

## THE DEATH OF THE OLD YEAR

FULL knee-deep lies the winter snow,  
And the winter winds are wearily sighing :  
Toll ye the church-bell sad and slow,  
And tread softly and speak low,  
For the old year lies a-dying.

Old year, you must not die ;  
You came to us so readily,  
You lived with us so steadily,  
Old year, you shall not die.

He lieth still ! he doth not move :  
He will not see the dawn of day.  
He hath no other life above.  
He gave me a friend, and a true true-love,  
And the New-year will take 'em away.

Old year, you must not go ;  
So long as you have been with us,  
Such joy as you have seen with us,  
Old year, you shall not go.

He froth'd his bumpers to the brim ;  
A jollier year we shall not see.  
But tho' his eyes are waxing dim,  
And tho' his foes speak ill of him,  
He was a friend to me.

Old year, you shall not die ;  
We did so laugh and cry with you,  
I've half a mind to die with you,  
Old year, if you must die.

He was full of joke and jest,  
But all his merry quips are o'er.  
To see him die, across the waste  
His son and heir doth ride post-haste,  
But he 'll be dead before.

Every one for his own.

The night is starry and cold, my friend,  
And the New-year blithe and bold, my friend,  
Comes up to take his own.

How hard he breathes ! over the snow

I heard just now the crowing cock.

The shadows flicker to and fro :

The cricket chirps : the light burns low :

'Tis nearly twelve o'clock.

Shake hands, before you die.

Old year, we 'll dearly rue for you :

What is it we can do for you ?

Speak out before you die.

His face is growing sharp and thin.

Alack ! our friend is gone.

Close up his eyes : tie up his chin :

Step from the corpse, and let him in

That standeth there alone,

And waiteth at the door.

There 's a new foot on the floor, my friend,

And a new face at the door, my friend,

A new face at the door.

## LOCKSLEY HALL

COMRADES, leave me here a little, while as yet 'tis  
early morn :

Leave me here, and when you want me, sound  
upon the bugle horn.

'Tis the place, and all around it, as of old, the  
curlews call,

Dreary gleams about the moorland flying over  
Locksley Hall ;

Locksley Hall, that in the distance overlooks the  
sandy tracts,

And the hollow ocean-ridges roaring into cataracts.

Many a night from yonder ivied casement, ere I  
went to rest,

Did I look on great Orion sloping slowly to the  
West.

Many a night I saw the Pleiads, rising thro' the  
mellow shade,

Glitter like a swarm of fire-flies tangled in a silver  
braid.

Here about the beach I wander'd, nourishing a  
youth sublime

With the fairy tales of science, and the long result  
of Time ;

When the centuries behind me like a fruitful land  
    reposed;

When I clung to all the present for the promise  
    that it closed:

When I dipt into the future far as human eye  
    could see;

Saw the Vision of the world, and all the wonder  
    that would be.—

In the Spring a fuller crimson comes upon the  
    robin's breast;

In the Spring the wanton lapwing gets himself  
    another crest;

In the Spring a livelier iris changes on the bur-  
    nish'd dove;

In the Spring a young man's fancy lightly turns  
    to thoughts of love.

Then her cheek was pale and thinner than should  
    be for one so young,

And her eyes on all my motions with a mute  
    observance hung.

And I said, ' My cousin Amy, speak, and speak  
    the truth to me,

Trust me, cousin, all the current of my being sets  
    to thee.'

On her pallid cheek and forehead came a colour  
and a light,  
As I have seen the rosy red flushing in the  
northern night.

And she turn'd—her bosom shaken with a sudden  
storm of sighs—  
All the spirit deeply dawning in the dark of hazel  
eyes—

Saying, 'I have hid my feelings, fearing they  
should do me wrong' ;  
Saying, 'Dost thou love me, cousin?' weeping,  
'I have loved thee long.'

Love took up the glass of Time, and turn'd it in  
his glowing hands ;  
Every moment, lightly shaken, ran itself in golden  
sands.

Love took up the harp of Life, and smote on all  
the chords with might ;  
Smote the chord of Self, that, trembling, pass'd  
in music out of sight.

Many a morning on the moorland did we hear the  
copses ring,  
And her whisper throng'd my pulses with the  
fullness of the Spring.

Many an evening by the waters did we watch the  
stately ships,  
And our spirits rush'd together at the touching of  
the lips.

O my cousin, shallow-hearted ! O my Amy, mine  
no more !

O the dreary, dreary moorland ! O the barren,  
barren shore !

Falser than all fancy fathoms, falser than all songs  
have sung,

Puppet to a father's threat, and servile to a  
shrewish tongue !

Is it well to wish thee happy ?—having known  
me—to decline

On a range of lower feelings and a narrower heart  
than mine !

Yet it shall be : thou shalt lower to his level day  
by day,

What is fine within thee growing coarse to sympathise with clay.

As the husband is, the wife is : thou art mated  
with a clown,

And the grossness of his nature will have weight  
to drag thee down.

He will hold thee, when his passion shall have  
spent its novel force,  
Something better than his dog, a little dearer  
than his horse.

What is this? his eyes are heavy: think not they  
are glazed with wine.

Go to him: it is thy duty: kiss him: take his  
hand in thine.

It may be my lord is weary, that his brain is over-  
wrought:

Soothe him with thy finer fancies, touch him with  
thy lighter thought.

He will answer to the purpose, easy things to  
understand—

Better thou wert dead before me, tho' I slew thee  
with my hand!

Better thou and I were lying, hidden from the  
heart's disgrace,

Roll'd in one another's arms, and silent in a last  
embrace.

Cursed be the social wants that sin against the  
strength of youth!

Cursed be the social lies that warp us from the  
living truth!

Cursed be the sickly forms that err from honest  
Nature's rule !

Cursed be the gold that gilds the straiten'd fore-  
head of the fool !

Well—'tis well that I should bluster !—Hadst  
thou less unworthy proved—

Would to God—for I had loved thee more than  
ever wife was loved.

Am I mad, that I should cherish that which bears  
but bitter fruit ?

I will pluck it from my bosom, tho' my heart be  
at the root.

Never, tho' my mortal summers to such length of  
years should come

As the many-winter'd crow that leads the clang ing  
rookery home.

Where is comfort ? in division of the records of  
the mind ?

Can I part her from herself, and love her, as I  
knew her, kind ?

I remember one that perish'd : sweetly did she  
speak and move :

Such a one do I remember, whom to look at was  
to love.

Can I think of her as dead, and love her for the  
love she bore ?

No—she never loved me truly : love is love for  
evermore.

Comfort ? comfort scorn'd of devils ! this is truth  
the poet sings,

That a sorrow's crown of sorrow is remembering  
happier things.

Drug thy memories, lest thou learn it, lest thy  
heart be put to proof,

In the dead unhappy night, and when the rain is  
on the roof.

Like a dog, he hunts in dreams, and thou art  
staring at the wall,

Where the dying night-lamp flickers, and the  
shadows rise and fall.

Then a hand shall pass before thee, pointing to  
his drunken sleep,

To thy widow'd marriage-pillows, to the tears that  
thou wilt weep.

Thou shalt hear the 'Never, never,' whisper'd by  
the phantom years,

And a song from out the distance in the ringing  
of thine ears ;

And an eye shall vex thee, looking ancient kindness on thy pain.

Turn thee, turn thee on thy pillow: get thee to thy rest again.

Nay, but Nature brings thee solace; for a tender voice will cry.

'Tis a purer life than thine; a lip to drain thy trouble dry.

Baby lips will laugh me down: my latest rival brings thee rest.

Baby fingers, waxen touches, press me from the mother's breast.

O, the child too clothes the father with a dearness not his due,

Half is thine and half is his: it will be worthy of the two.

O, I see thee old and formal, fitted to thy petty part,

With a little hoard of maxims preaching down a daughter's heart.

'They were dangerous guides the feelings—she herself was not exempt—

Truly, she herself had suffer'd'—Perish in thy self-contempt!

Can I but relive in sadness? I will turn that earlier page.

Hide me from my deep emotion, O thou wondrous Mother-Age!

Make me feel the wild pulsation, that I felt before the strife,

When I heard my days before me, and the tumult of my life;

Yearning for the large excitement that the coming years would yield,

Eager-hearted as a boy when first he leaves his father's field,

And at night along the dusky highway near and nearer drawn,

Sees in heaven the light of London flaring like a dreary dawn;

And his spirit leaps within him to be gone before him then,

Underneath the light he looks at, in among the throngs of men;

Men, my brothers, men the workers, ever reaping something new:

That which they have done but earnest of the things that they shall do:

For I dipt into the future, far as human eye could  
see,

Saw the Vision of the world, and all the wonder  
that would be;

Saw the heavens fill with commerce, argosies of  
magic sails,

Pilots of the purple twilight, dropping down with  
costly bales;

Heard the heavens fill with shouting, and there  
rain'd a ghastly dew

From the nations' airy navies grappling in the  
central blue;

Far along the world-wide whisper of the south-  
wind rushing warm,

With the standards of the peoples plunging thro'  
the thunder-storm;

Till the war-drum throb'd no longer, and the  
battle-flags were furl'd

In the Parliament of man, the Federation of the  
world.

There the common sense of most shall hold a  
fretful realm in awe,

And the kindly earth shall slumber, lapt in  
universal law.

So I triumph'd, ere my passion sweeping thro' me  
left me dry,

Left me with the palsied heart, and left me with  
the jaundiced eye;

Eye, to which all order festers, all things here are  
out of joint,

Science moves, but slowly, slowly, creeping on  
from point to point:

Slowly comes a hungry people, as a lion, creeping  
nigher,

Glares at one that nods and winks behind a  
slowly-dying fire.

Yet I doubt not thro' the ages one increasing  
purpose runs,

And the thoughts of men are widen'd with the  
process of the suns.

What is that to him that reaps not harvest of his  
youthful joys,

Tho' the deep heart of existence beat for ever  
like a boy's?

Knowledge comes, but wisdom lingers, and I  
linger on the shore,

And the individual withers, and the world is more  
and more.

Knowledge comes, but wisdom lingers, and he  
bears a laden breast,  
Full of sad experience, moving toward the stillness  
of his rest.

Not in vain the distance beacons. Forward, for-  
ward let us range.  
Let the great world spin for ever down the ring-  
ing grooves of change.

Thro' the shadow of the globe we sweep into the  
younger day :  
Better fifty years of Europe than a cycle of  
Cathay.

Mother-Age (for mine I knew not) help me as  
when life begun :  
Rift the hills, and roll the waters, flash the light-  
nings, weigh the Sun—

O, I see the crescent promise of my spirit hath  
not set.  
Ancient founts of inspiration well thro' all my  
fancy yet.

Howsoever these things be, a long farewell to  
Locksley Hall !  
Now for me the woods may wither, now for me  
the roof-tree fall.

Comes a vapour from the margin, blackening over  
heath and holt,  
Cramming all the blast before it, in its breast a  
thunderbolt.

Let it fall on Locksley Hall, with rain or hail, or  
fire or snow ;  
For the mighty wind arises, roaring seaward, and  
I go.

### GODIVA

*I waited for the train at Coventry ;  
I hung with grooms and porters on the bridge,  
To watch the three tall spires ; and there I shaped  
The city's ancient legend into this :—*

Not only we, the latest seed of Time,  
New men, that in the flying of a wheel  
Cry down the past, not only we, that prate  
Of rights and wrongs, have loved the people well,  
And loathed to see them overtax'd ; but she  
Did more, and underwent, and overcame,  
The woman of a thousand summers back,  
Godiva, wife to that grim Earl, who ruled  
In Coventry : for when he laid a tax  
Upon his town, and all the mothers brought  
Their children, clamouring, 'If we pay, we starve !'

She sought her lord, and found him, where he strode

About the hall, among his dogs, alone,  
His beard a foot before him, and his hair  
A yard behind. She told him of their tears,  
And prayed him, 'If they pay this tax, they  
starve.'

Whereat he stared, replying, half-amazed,  
'You would not let your little finger ache  
For such as *these*?—' But I would die,' said she.  
He laugh'd, and swore by Peter and by Paul :  
Then fillip'd at the diamond in her ear ;  
'O aye, aye, aye, you talk !'—'Alas !' she said,  
'But prove me what it is I would not do.'  
And from a heart as rough as Esau's hand,  
He answer'd, 'Ride you naked thro' the town,  
And I repeal it' ; and nodding, as in scorn,  
He parted, with great strides among his dogs.

So left alone, the passions of her mind,  
As winds from all the compass shift and blow,  
Made war upon each other for an hour,  
Till pity won. She sent a herald forth,  
And bade him cry, with sound of trumpet, all  
The hard condition ; but that she would loose  
The people : therefore, as they loved her well,  
From then till noon no foot should pace the  
street,

No eye look down, she passing ; but that all  
Should keep within, door shut, and window barr'd.  
Then fled she to her inmost bower, and there

Unclasp'd the wedded eagles of her belt,  
The grim Earl's gift ; but ever at a breath  
She linger'd, looking like a summer moon  
Half-dipt in cloud : anon she shook her head,  
And shower'd the rippled ringlets to her knee ;  
Unclad herself in haste ; adown the stair  
Stole on ; and, like a creeping sunbeam, slid  
From pillar unto pillar, until she reach'd  
The gateway ; there she found her palfrey trapt  
In purple blazon'd with armorial gold.

Then she rode forth, clothed on with chastity :  
The deep air listen'd round her as she rode,  
And all the low wind hardly breathed for fear.  
The little wide-mouth'd heads upon the spout  
Had cunning eyes to see ; the barking cur  
Made her cheek flame : her palfrey's footfall shot  
Light horrors thro' her pulses : the blind walls  
Were full of chinks and holes ; and overhead  
Fantastic gables, crowding, stared : but she  
Not less thro' all bore up, till, last, she saw  
The white-flower'd elder-thicket from the field  
Gleam thro' the Gothic archways in the wall.

Then she rode back, clothed on with chastity :  
And one low churl, compact of thankless earth,  
The fatal byword of all years to come,  
Boring a little augur-hole in fear,  
Peep'd—but his eyes, before they had their will,  
Were shrivell'd into darkness in his head,  
And dropt before him. So the Powers, who wait  
On noble deeds, cancell'd a sense misused ;

And she, that knew not, pass'd : and all at once,  
With twelve great shocks of sound, the shameless  
noon

Was clash'd and hammer'd from a hundred towers,  
One after one : but even then she gain'd  
Her bower ; whence reissuing, robed and crown'd,  
To meet her lord, she took the tax away,  
And built herself an everlasting name.

## ST. AGNES' EVE

DEEP on the convent-roof the snows  
Are sparkling to the moon :  
My breath to heaven like vapour goes :  
May my soul follow soon !  
The shadows of the convent-towers  
Slant down the snowy sward,  
Still creeping with the creeping hours  
That lead me to my Lord :  
Make thou my spirit pure and clear  
As are the frosty skies,  
Or this first snowdrop of the year  
That in my bosom lies.

As these white robes are soiled and dark,  
To yonder shining ground :  
As this pale taper's earthly spark,  
To yonder argent round ;

So shows my soul before the Lamb,  
 My spirit before Thee ;  
 So in mine earthly house I am,  
 To that I hope to be.  
 Break up the heavens, O Lord ! and far,  
 Thro' all yon starlight keen,  
 Draw me, Thy bride, a glittering star,  
 In raiment white and clean.

He lifts me to the golden doors ;  
 The flashes come and go ;  
 All heaven bursts her starry floors,  
 And strews her lights below,  
 And deepens on and up ! the gates  
 Roll back, and far within  
 For me the Heavenly Bridegroom waits,  
 To make me pure of sin.  
 The sabbaths of Eternity,  
 One sabbath deep and wide—  
 A light upon the shining sea—  
 The Bridegroom with his bride !

### SIR GALAHAD

My good blade carves the casques of men,  
 My tough lance thrusteth sure,  
 My strength is as the strength of ten,  
 Because my heart is pure.

The shattering trumpet shrilleth high,  
The hard brands shiver on the steel,  
The splinter'd spear-shafts crack and fly,  
The horse and rider reel :  
They reel, they roll in clang ing lists,  
And when the tide of combat stands,  
Perfume and flowers fall in showers,  
That lightly rain from ladies' hands.

How sweet are looks that ladies bend  
On whom their favours fall !  
For them I battle till the end,  
To save from shame and thrall :  
But all my heart is drawn above,  
My knees are bow'd in crypt and shrine :  
I never felt the kiss of love,  
Nor maiden's hand in mine.  
More bounteous aspects on me beam,  
Me mightier transports move and thrill ;  
So keep I fair thro' faith and prayer  
A virgin heart in work and will.

When down the stormy crescent goes,  
A light before me swims,  
Between dark stems the forest glows,  
I hear a noise of hymns :  
Then by some secret shrine I ride ;  
I hear a voice, but none are there ;  
The stalls are void, the doors are wide,  
The tapers burning fair.

Fair gleams the snowy altar-cloth,  
The silver vessels sparkle clean,  
The shrill bell rings, the censer swings,  
And solemn chaunts resound between.

Sometimes on lonely mountain-meres  
I find a magic bark ;  
I leap on board : no helmsman steers :  
I float till all is dark.

A gentle sound, an awful light !  
Three angels bear the holy Grail :  
With folded feet, in stoles of white,  
On sleeping wings they sail.

Ah, blessed vision ! blood of God !  
My spirit beats her mortal bars,  
As down dark tides the glory slides,  
And star-like mingles with the stars.

When on my goodly charger borne  
Thro' dreaming towns I go,  
The cock crows ere the Christmas morn,  
The streets are dumb with snow.  
The tempest crackles on the leads,  
And, ringing, spins from brand and mail ;  
But o'er the dark a glory spreads,  
And gilds the driving hail.  
I leave the plain, I climb the height ;  
No branchy thicket shelter yields ;  
But blessed forms in whistling storms  
Fly o'er waste fens and windy fields.

A maiden knight—to me is given  
Such hope, I know not fear;  
I yearn to breathe the airs of heaven  
That often meet me here.  
I muse on joy that will not cease,  
Pure spaces clothed in living beams,  
Pure lilies of eternal peace,  
Whose odours haunt my dreams;  
And, stricken by an angel's hand,  
This mortal armour that I wear,  
This weight and size, this heart and eyes,  
Are touch'd, are turn'd to finest air.

The clouds are broken in the sky,  
And thro' the mountain-walls  
A rolling organ-harmony  
Swells up, and shakes and falls.  
Then move the trees, the copses nod,  
Wings flutter, voices hover clear:  
'O just and faithful knight of God!  
Ride on! the prize is near.'  
So pass I hostel, hall, and grange;  
By bridge and ford, by park and pale,  
All-arm'd I ride, whate'er betide,  
Until I find the holy Grail.

## BREAK, BREAK, BREAK

BREAK, break, break,  
On thy cold grey stones, O Sea !  
And I would that my tongue could utter  
The thoughts that arise in me.

O well for the fisherman's boy,  
That he shouts with his sister at play !  
O well for the sailor lad,  
That he sings in his boat on the bay !

And the stately ships go on  
To their haven under the hill ;  
But O for the touch of a vanish'd hand,  
And the sound of a voice that is still !

Break, break, break,  
At the foot of thy crags, O Sea !  
But the tender grace of a day that is dead  
Will never come back to me.

## THE CHARGE OF THE LIGHT BRIGADE

## I

HALF a league, half a league,  
Half a league onward,  
All in the valley of Death  
Rode the six hundred.  
‘Forward, the Light Brigade !  
Charge for the guns !’ he said :  
Into the valley of Death  
Rode the six hundred.

## II

‘Forward, the Light Brigade !’  
Was there a man dismay’d ?  
Not tho’ the soldier knew  
Some one had blunder’d :  
Theirs not to make reply,  
Theirs not to reason why,  
Theirs but to do and die :  
Into the valley of Death  
Rode the six hundred.

## III

Cannon to right of them,  
Cannon to left of them,  
Cannon in front of them  
Volley’d and thunder’d ;

Storm'd at with shot and shell,  
Boldly they rode and well,  
Into the jaws of Death,  
Into the mouth of Hell  
Rode the six hundred.

## IV

Flash'd all their sabres bare,  
Flash'd as they turn'd in air,  
Sabring the gunners there,  
Charging an army, while  
All the world wonder'd :  
Plunged in the battery-smoke  
Right thro' the line they broke ;  
Cossack and Russian  
Reel'd from the sabre-stroke  
Shatter'd and sunder'd.  
Then they rode back, but not,  
Not the six hundred.

## V

Cannon to right of them,  
Cannon to left of them,  
Cannon behind them  
Volley'd and thunder'd ;  
Storm'd at with shot and shell,  
While horse and hero fell,  
They that had fought so well

Came thro' the jaws of Death  
Back from the mouth of Hell,  
All that was left of them,  
Left of six hundred.

## VI

When can their glory fade ?  
O the wild charge they made !  
All the world wonder'd.  
Honour the charge they made !  
Honour the Light Brigade,  
Noble six hundred !

## THE BROOK

I COME from haunts of coot and hern,  
I make a sudden sally,  
And sparkle out among the fern,  
To bicker down a valley.

By thirty hills I hurry down,  
Or slip between the ridges,  
By twenty thorps, a little town,  
And half a hundred bridges.

Till last by Philip's farm I flow  
To join the brimming river,  
For men may come and men may go,  
But I go on for ever.

I chatter over stony ways,  
In little sharps and trebles,  
I bubble into eddying bays,  
I babble on the pebbles.

With many a curve my banks I fret  
By many a field and fallow,  
And many a fairy foreland set  
With willow-weed and mallow.

I chatter, chatter, as I flow  
To join the brimming river,  
For men may come and men may go,  
But I go on for ever.

I wind about, and in and out,  
With here a blossom sailing,  
And here and there a lusty trout,  
And here and there a grayling,

And here and there a foamy flake  
Upon me, as I travel  
With many a silvery waterbreak  
Above the golden gravel,

And draw them all along, and flow  
To join the brimming river,  
For men may come and men may go,  
But I go on for ever.

I steal by lawns and grassy plots,  
I slide by hazel covers ;  
I move the sweet forget-me-nots  
That grow for happy lovers.

I slip, I slide, I gloom, I glance,  
Among my skimming swallows ;  
I make the netted sunbeam dance  
Against my sandy shallows.

I murmur under moon and stars  
In brambly wildernesses ;  
I linger by my shingly bars ;  
I loiter round my cresses ;

And out again I curve and flow  
To join the brimming river,  
For men may come and men may go,  
But I go on for ever.

## THE PRINCESS

## I

SWEET and low, sweet and low,  
Wind of the western sea,  
Low, low, breathe and blow,  
Wind of the western sea !

Over the rolling waters go,  
 Come from the dying moon, and blow,  
 Blow him again to me ;  
 While my little one, while my pretty one,  
 sleeps.

Sleep and rest, sleep and rest,  
 Father will come to thee soon ;  
 Rest, rest, on mother's breast,  
 Father will come to thee soon ;  
 Father will come to his babe in the nest,  
 Silver sails all out of the west  
 Under the silver moon :  
 Sleep, my little one, sleep, my pretty one,  
 sleep.

## II

The splendour falls on castle walls  
 And snowy summits old in story :  
 The long light shakes across the lakes,  
 And the wild cataract leaps in glory.  
 Blow, bugle, blow, set the wild echoes flying,  
 Blow, bugle ; answer, echoes, dying, dying, dying.

O hark, O hear ! how thin and clear,  
 And thinner, clearer, farther going !  
 O sweet and far from cliff and scar  
 The horns of Elfland faintly blowing !  
 Blow, let us hear the purple glens replying :  
 Blow, bugle ; answer, echoes, dying, dying, dying.

O love, they die in yon rich sky,  
They faint on hill or field or river :  
Our echoes roll from soul to soul,  
And grow for ever and for ever.

Blow, bugle, blow, set the wild echoes flying,  
And answer, echoes, answer, dying, dying, dying.

## III

Tears, idle tears, I know not what they mean,  
Tears from the depth of some divine despair  
Rise in the heart, and gather to the eyes,  
In looking on the happy Autumn-fields,  
And thinking of the days that are no more.

Fresh as the first beam glittering on a sail,  
That brings our friends up from the underworld,  
Sad as the last which reddens over one  
That sinks with all we love below the verge ;  
So sad, so fresh, the days that are no more.

Ah, sad and strange as in dark summer dawns  
The earliest pipe of half-awaken'd birds  
To dying ears, when unto dying eyes  
The casement slowly grows a glimmering square ;  
So sad, so strange, the days that are no more.

Dear as remember'd kisses after death,  
And sweet as those by hopeless fancy feign'd  
On lips that are for others ; deep as love,  
Deep as first love, and wild with all regret ;  
O Death in Life, the days that are no more.

Home they brought her warrior dead :  
 She nor swoon'd, nor utter'd cry :  
 All her maidens, watching, said,  
 'She must weep or she will die.'

Then they praised him, soft and low,  
 Call'd him worthy to be loved,  
 Truest friend and noblest foe ;  
 Yet she neither spoke nor moved.

Stole a maiden from her place,  
 Lightly to the warrior stept,  
 Took the face-cloth from the face ;  
 Yet she neither moved nor wept.

Rose a nurse of ninety years,  
 Set his child upon her knee—  
 Like summer tempest came her tears—  
 'Sweet my child, I live for thee.'

'Blame not thyself too much,' I said, 'nor blame  
 Too much the sons of men and barbarous laws ;  
 These were the rough ways of the world till now.  
 Henceforth thou hast a helper, me, that know  
 The woman's cause is man's : they rise or sink  
 Together, dwarf'd or godlike, bond or free :  
 For she that out of Lethe scales with man

The shining steps of Nature, shares with man  
His nights, his days, moves with him to one goal,  
Stays all the fair young planet in her hands—  
If she be small, slight-natur'd, miserable,  
How shall men grow? but work no more alone!  
Our place is much: as far as in us lies  
We two will serve them both in aiding her—  
Will clear away the parasitic forms  
That seem to keep her up but drag her down—  
Will leave her space to burgeon out of all  
Within her—let her make herself her own  
To give or keep, to live and learn and be  
All that not harms distinctive womanhood.  
For woman is not undeveloped man,  
But diverse: could we make her as the man,  
Sweet Love were slain: his dearest bond is this,  
Not like to like, but like in difference.  
Yet in the long years liker must they grow;  
The man be more of woman, she of man;  
He gain in sweetness and in moral height,  
Nor lose the wrestling thews that throw the  
world;  
She mental breadth, nor fail in childward care,  
Nor lose the childlike in the larger mind;  
Till at the last she set herself to man,  
Like perfect music unto noble words;  
And so these twain, upon the skirts of Time,  
Sit side by side, full-summ'd in all their powers,  
Dispensing harvest, sowing the To-be,  
Self-reverent each and reverencing each,

Distinct in individualities,  
 But like each other ev'n as those who love.  
 Then comes the statelier Eden back to men :  
 Then reign the world's great bridals, chaste and  
     calm :  
 Then springs the crowning race of humankind.  
 May these things be !'

Sighing she spoke, 'I fear  
 They will not.'

' Dear, but let us type them now  
 In our own lives, and this proud watchword rest  
 Of equal ; seeing either sex alone  
 Is half itself, and in true marriage lies  
 Nor equal, nor unequal : each fulfils  
 Defect in each, and always thought in thought,  
 Purpose in purpose, will in will, they grow,  
 The single pure and perfect animal,  
 The two-cell'd heart beating, with one full stroke,  
 Life.'

And again sighing she spoke : ' A dream  
 That once was mine ! what woman taught you  
 this ? '

' Alone,' I said, ' from earlier than I know,  
 Immersed in rich foreshadowings of the world,  
 I loved the woman : he, that doth not, lives  
 A drowning life, besotted in sweet self,  
 Or pines in sad experience worse than death,  
 Or keeps his wing'd affections clipt with crime :  
 Yet was there one thro' whom I loved her, one

Not learned, save in gracious household ways,  
Not perfect, nay, but full of tender wants,  
No Angel, but a dearer being, all dipt  
In Angel instincts, breathing Paradise,  
Interpreter between the Gods and men,  
Who look'd all native to her place, and yet  
On tiptoe seem'd to touch upon a sphere  
Too gross to tread, and all male minds perforce  
Sway'd to her from their orbits as they moved,  
And girdled her with music. Happy he  
With such a mother ! faith in womankind  
Beats with his blood, and trust in all things high  
Comes easy to him, and tho' he trip and fall  
He shall not blind his soul with clay.'

## IN MEMORIAM A. H. H.

OBIIT MDCCCXXXIII

STRONG Son of God, immortal Love,  
Whom we, that have not seen thy face,  
By faith, and faith alone, embrace,  
Believing where we cannot prove ;

Thine are these orbs of light and shade ;  
Thou madest Life in man and brute ;  
Thou madest Death ; and lo, thy foot  
Is on the skull which thou hast made.

Thou wilt not leave us in the dust :  
Thou madest man, he knows not why ;  
He thinks he was not made to die ;  
And thou hast made him : thou art just.

Thou seemest human and divine,  
The highest, holiest manhood, thou :  
Our wills are ours, we know not how :  
Our wills are ours, to make them thine.

Our little systems have their day ;  
They have their day and cease to be :  
They are but broken lights of thee,  
And thou, O Lord, art more than they.

We have but faith : we cannot know ;  
For knowledge is of things we see ;  
And yet we trust it comes from thee,  
A beam in darkness : let it grow.

Let knowledge grow from more to more,  
But more of reverence in us dwell ;  
That mind and soul, according well,  
May make one music as before,

But vaster. We are fools and slight ;  
We mock thee when we do not fear :  
But help thy foolish ones to bear ;  
Help thy vain worlds to bear thy light.

Forgive what seem'd my sin in me ;  
What seem'd my worth since I began ;  
For merit lives from man to man,  
And not from man, O Lord, to thee.

Forgive my grief for one removed,  
Thy creature, whom I found so fair.  
I trust he lives in thee, and there  
I find him worthier to be loved.

Forgive these wild and wandering cries,  
Confusions of a wasted youth ;  
Forgive them where they fail in truth,  
And in thy wisdom make me wise.

1849.

I

I HELD it truth, with him who sings  
To one clear harp in divers tones,  
That men may rise on stepping-stones  
Of their dead selves to higher things.

But who shall so forecast the years  
And find in loss a gain to match ?  
Or reach a hand thro' time to catch  
The far-off interest of tears ?

Let Love clasp Grief lest both be drown'd,  
 Let darkness keep her raven gloss :  
 Ah, sweeter to be drunk with loss,  
 To dance with death, to beat the ground,

Than that the victor Hours should scorn  
 The long result of love, and boast,  
 'Behold the man that loved and lost,  
 But all he was is overworn.'

## v

I sometimes hold it half a sin  
 To put in words the grief I feel ;  
 For words, like Nature, half reveal  
 And half conceal the Soul within.

But, for the unquiet heart and brain,  
 A use in measured language lies ;  
 The sad mechanic exercise,  
 Like dull narcotics, numbing pain.

In words, like weeds, I 'll wrap me o'er,  
 Like coarsest clothes against the cold ;  
 But that large grief which these enfold  
 Is given in outline and no more.

## xix

The Danube to the Severn gave  
 The darken'd heart that beat no more ;  
 They laid him by the pleasant shore,  
 And in the hearing of the wave.

There twice a day the Severn fills ;  
The salt sea-water passes by,  
And hushes half the babbling Wye,  
And makes a silence in the hills.

Then Wye is hush'd nor moved along,  
And hush'd my deepest grief of all,  
When fill'd with tears that cannot fall,  
I brim with sorrow drowning song.

The tide flows down, the wave again  
Is vocal in its wooded walls ;  
My deeper anguish also falls,  
And I can speak a little then.

## xxii

The path by which we twain did go,  
Which led by tracts that pleased us well,  
Thro' four sweet years arose and fell,  
From flower to flower, from snow to snow :

And we with singing cheer'd the way,  
And crown'd with all the season lent,  
From April on to April went,  
And glad at heart from May to May :

But where the path we walk'd began  
To slant the fifth autumnal slope,  
As we descended following Hope,  
There sat the Shadow fear'd of man ;

Who broke our fair companionship,  
 And spread his mantle dark and cold,  
 And wrapt thee formless in the fold,  
 And dull'd the murmur on thy lip,  
  
 And bore thee where I could not see  
 Nor follow, tho' I walk in haste,  
 And think, that somewhere in the waste  
 The Shadow sits and waits for me.

## XXVII

I envy not in any moods  
 The captive void of noble rage,  
 The linnet born within the cage,  
 That never knew the summer woods :

I envy not the beast that takes  
 His licence in the field of time,  
 Unfetter'd by the sense of crime,  
 To whom a conscience never wakes ;

Nor, what may count itself as blest,  
 The heart that never plighted troth  
 But stagnates in the weeds of sloth ;  
 Nor any want-begotten rest.

I hold it true, whate'er befall ;  
 I feel it, when I sorrow most ;  
 'Tis better to have loved and lost  
 Than never to have loved at all.

## LIII

Oh yet we trust that somehow good  
Will be the final goal of ill,  
To pangs of nature, sins of will,  
Defects of doubt, and taints of blood :

That nothing walks with aimless feet ;  
That not one life shall be destroy'd,  
Or cast as rubbish to the void,  
When God hath made the pile complete ;

That not a worm is cloven in vain ;  
That not a moth with vain desire  
Is shrivel'd in a fruitless fire,  
Or but subserves another's gain.

Behold, we know not anything ;  
I can but trust that good shall fall  
At last—far off—at last, to all,  
And every winter change to spring.

So runs my dream : but what am I ?  
An infant crying in the night :  
An infant crying for the light :  
And with no language but a cry.

## LIV

The wish, that of the living whole  
No life may fail beyond the grave,  
Derives it not from what we have  
The likeliest God within the soul ?

Are God and Nature then at strife,  
 That Nature lends such evil dreams?  
 So careful of the type she seems,  
 So careless of the single life;

That I, considering everywhere  
 Her secret meaning in her deeds,  
 And finding that of fifty seeds  
 She often brings but one to bear,

I falter where I firmly trod,  
 And falling with my weight of cares  
 Upon the great world's altar-stairs  
 That slope thro' darkness up to God,

I stretch lame hands of faith, and grope,  
 And gather dust and chaff, and call  
 To what I feel is Lord of all,  
 And faintly trust the larger hope.

## LXIII

Dost thou look back on what hath been,  
 As some divinely gifted man,  
 Whose life in low estate began  
 And on a simple village green;

Who breaks his birth's invidious bar,  
 And grasps the skirts of happy chance,  
 And breasts the blows of circumstance,  
 And grapples with his evil star;

Who makes by force his merit known  
And lives to clutch the golden keys,  
To mould a mighty state's decrees,  
And shape the whisper of the throne ;

And moving up from high to higher,  
Becomes on Fortune's crowning slope  
The pillar of a people's hope,  
The centre of a world's desire ;

Yet feels, as in a pensive dream,  
When all his active powers are still,  
A distant dearness in the hill,  
A secret sweetness in the stream,

The limit of his narrower fate,  
While yet beside its vocal springs  
He play'd at counsellors and kings,  
With one that was his earliest mate ;

Who ploughs with pain his native lea  
And reaps the labour of his hands,  
Or in the furrow musing stands :  
'Does my old friend remember me ?'

## xcv

You say, but with no touch of scorn,  
Sweet-hearted, you, whose light-blue eyes  
Are tender over drowning flies,  
You tell me, doubt is Devil-born.

I know not: one indeed I knew  
 In many a subtle question versed,  
 Who touch'd a jarring lyre at first,  
 But ever strove to make it true:

Perplexed in faith, but pure in deeds,  
 At last he beat his music out.  
 There lives more faith in honest doubt,  
 Believe me, than in half the creeds.

He fought his doubts and gather'd strength,  
 He would not make his judgment blind,  
 He faced the spectres of the mind  
 And laid them: thus he came at length

To find a stronger faith his own;  
 And Power was with him in the night,  
 Which makes the darkness and the light,  
 And dwells not in the light alone,

But in the darkness and the cloud,  
 As over Sinai's peaks of old,  
 While Israel made their gods of gold,  
 Altho' the trumpet blew so loud.

## cv

Ring out, wild bells, to the wild sky,  
 The flying cloud, the frosty light:  
 The year is dying in the night;  
 Ring out, wild bells, and let him die.

Ring out the old, ring in the new,  
Ring, happy bells, across the snow :  
The year is going, let him go ;  
Ring out the false, ring in the true.

Ring out the grief that saps the mind,  
For those that here we see no more ;  
Ring out the feud of rich and poor,  
Ring in redress to all mankind.

Ring out a slowly dying cause,  
And ancient forms of party strife ;  
Ring in the nobler modes of life,  
With sweeter manners, purer laws.

Ring out the want, the care, the sin,  
The faithless coldness of the times ;  
Ring out, ring out my mournful rhymes,  
But ring the fuller minstrel in.

Ring out false pride in place and blood,  
The civic slander and the spite ;  
Ring in the love of truth and right,  
Ring in the common love of good.

Ring out old shapes of foul disease ;  
Ring out the narrowing lust of gold ;  
Ring out the thousand wars of old,  
Ring in the thousand years of peace.

Ring in the valiant man and free,  
 The larger heart, the kindlier hand ;  
 Ring out the darkness of the land,  
 Ring in the Christ that is to be.

## CXIII

Who loves not Knowledge ? Who shall rail  
 Against her beauty ? May she mix  
 With men and prosper ! Who shall fix  
 Her pillars ? Let her work prevail.

But on her forehead sits a fire :  
 She sets her forward countenance  
 And leaps into the future chance,  
 Submitting all things to desire.

Half-grown as yet, a child, and vain—  
 She cannot fight the fear of death.  
 What is she, cut from love and faith,  
 But some wild Pallas from the brain

Of Demons ? fiery-hot to burst  
 All barriers in her onward race  
 For power. Let her know her place ;  
 She is the second, not the first.

A higher hand must make her mild,  
 If all be not in vain ; and guide  
 Her footsteps, moving side by side  
 With wisdom, like the younger child :

For she is earthly of the mind,  
But Wisdom heavenly of the soul.  
O, friend, who camest to thy goal  
So early, leaving me behind,

I would the great world grew like thee,  
Who grewest not alone in power  
And knowledge, but by year and hour  
In reverence and in charity.

## MAUD

## I

## I

O LET the solid ground  
Not fail beneath my feet  
Before my life has found  
What some have found so sweet ;  
Then let come what come may,  
What matter if I go mad,  
I shall have had my day.

## II

Let the sweet heavens endure,  
Not close and darken above me  
Before I am quite quite sure  
That there is one to love me ;

Then let come what come may,  
 To a life that has been so sad,  
 I shall have had my day.

## II

## I

Come into the garden, Maud,  
 For the black bat, Night, has flown,  
 Come into the garden, Maud,  
 I am here at the gate alone ;  
 And the woodbine spices are wafted abroad,  
 And the musk of the roses blown.

## II

For a breeze of morning moves,  
 And the planet of Love is on high,  
 Beginning to faint in the light that she loves  
 On a bed of daffodil sky,  
 To faint in the light of the sun she loves,  
 To faint in his light, and to die.

## III

All night have the roses heard  
 The flute, violin, bassoon ;  
 All night has the casement jessamine stirr'd  
 To the dancers dancing in tune ;  
 Till a silence fell with the waking bird,  
 And a hush with the setting moon.

## IV

I said to the lily, 'There is but one  
With whom she has heart to be gay.  
When will the dancers leave her alone?  
She is weary of dance and play.'  
Now half to the setting moon are gone,  
And half to the rising day;  
Low on the sand and loud on the stone  
The last wheel echoes away.

## V

I said to the rose, 'The brief night goes  
In babble and revel and wine.  
O young lord-lover, what sighs are those  
For one that will never be thine?  
But mine, but mine,' so I sware to the rose,  
'For ever and ever, mine.'

## VI

And the soul of the rose went into my  
blood,  
As the music clash'd in the hall;  
And long by the garden lake I stood,  
For I heard your rivulet fall  
From the lake to the meadow and on to the  
wood,  
Our wood, that is dearer than all;

## VII

From the meadow your walks have left so sweet  
That whenever a March-wind sighs  
He sets the jewel-print of your feet  
In violets blue as your eyes,  
To the woody hollows in which we meet  
And the valleys of Paradise.

## VIII

The slender acacia would not shake  
One long milk-bloom on the tree ;  
The white lake-blossom fell into the lake,  
As the pimpernel dozed on the lea ;  
But the rose was awake all night for your sake,  
Knowing your promise to me ;  
The lilies and roses were all awake,  
They sigh'd for the dawn and thee.

## IX

Queen rose of the rosebud garden of girls,  
Come hither, the dances are done,  
In gloss of satin and glimmer of pearls,  
Queen lily and rose in one ;  
Shine out, little head, sunning over with curls,  
To the flowers, and be their sun.

## x

There has fallen a splendid tear  
From the passion-flower at the gate.  
She is coming, my dove, my dear ;  
She is coming, my life, my fate ;  
The red rose cries, 'She is near, she is near' ;  
And the white rose weeps, 'She is late' ;  
The larkspur listens, 'I hear, I hear' ;  
And the lily whispers, 'I wait.'

## xi

She is coming, my own, my sweet ;  
Were it ever so airy a tread,  
My heart would hear her and beat,  
Were it earth in an earthy bed ;  
My dust would hear her and beat,  
Had I lain for a century dead ;  
Would start and tremble under her feet,  
And blossom in purple and red.

## IDYLLS OF THE KING

## SONG FROM 'VIVIEN'

IN Love, if Love be Love, if Love be ours,  
 Faith and unfaith can ne'er be equal powers :  
 Unfaith in aught is want of faith in all.

It is the little rift within the lute,  
 That by and by will make the music mute,  
 And ever widening slowly silence all.

The little rift within the lover's lute,  
 Or little pitted speck in garner'd fruit,  
 That rotting inward slowly moulders all.

It is not worth the keeping : let it go :  
 But shall it ? answer, darling, answer, no.  
 And trust me not at all or all in all.

## LANCELOT AND ELAINE

BUT when the next sun brake from underground,  
 Then, those two brethren slowly with bent brows  
 Accompanying, the sad chariot-bier  
 Past like a shadow thro' the field, that shone  
 Full-summer, to that stream whereon the barge,  
 Pall'd all its length in blackest samite, lay.

There sat the lifelong creature of the house,  
Loyal, the dumb old servitor, on deck,  
Winking his eyes, and twisted all his face.  
So those two brethren from the chariot took  
And on the black decks laid her in her bed,  
Set in her hand a lily, o'er her hung  
The silken case with braided blazonings,  
And kiss'd her quiet brows, and saying to her  
'Sister, farewell for ever,' and again  
'Farewell, sweet sister,' parted all in tears.  
Then rose the dumb old servitor, and the dead  
Steer'd by the dumb went upward with the flood—  
In her right hand the lily, in her left  
The letter—all her bright hair streaming down—  
And all the coverlid was cloth of gold  
Drawn to her waist, and she herself in white  
All but her face, and that clear-featured face  
Was lovely, for she did not seem as dead  
But fast asleep, and lay as tho' she smiled.

All in an oriel on the summer side,  
Vine-clad, of Arthur's palace toward the stream,  
They met, and Lancelot kneeling utter'd, 'Queen,  
Lady, my liege, in whom I have my joy,  
Take, what I had not won except for you,  
These jewels, and make me happy, making them  
An armlet for the roundest arm on earth,  
Or necklace for a neck to which the swan's  
Is tawnier than her cygnet's: these are words:  
Your beauty is your beauty, and I sin

In speaking, yet O grant my worship of it  
 Words, as we grant grief tears. Such sin in words  
 Perchance, we both can pardon: but, my Queen,  
 I hear of rumours flying thro' your court.  
 Our bond, as not the bond of man and wife,  
 Should have in it an absulter trust  
 To make up that defect: let rumours be:  
 When did not rumours fly? these, as I trust  
 That you trust me in your own nobleness,  
 I may not well believe that you believe.'

While thus he spoke, half turn'd away, the Queen

Brake from the vast oriel-embowering vine  
 Leaf after leaf, and tore, and cast them off,  
 Till all the place whereon she stood was green;  
 Then, when he ceased, in one cold passive hand  
 Received at once and laid aside the gems  
 There on a table near her, and replied.

‘ It may be, I am quicker of belief  
 Than you believe me, Lancelot of the Lake.  
 Our bond is not the bond of man and wife.  
 This good is in it, whatsoe'er of ill,  
 It can be broken easier. I for you  
 This many a year have done despite and wrong  
 To one whom ever in my heart of hearts  
 I did acknowledge nobler. What are these?  
 Diamonds for me! they had been thrice their  
 worth

Being your gift, had you not lost your own.  
To loyal hearts the value of all gifts  
Must vary as the giver's. Not for me!  
For her! for your new fancy. Only this  
Grant me, I pray you: have your joys apart.  
I doubt not that however changed, you keep  
So much of what is graceful: and myself  
Would shun to break those bounds of courtesy  
In which as Arthur's queen I move and rule:  
So cannot speak my mind. An end to this!  
A strange one! yet I take it with Amen.  
So pray you, add my diamonds to her pearls;  
Deck her with these; tell her, she shines me  
down:  
An armlet for an arm to which the Queen's  
Is haggard, or a necklace for a neck  
O as much fairer—as a faith once fair  
Was richer than these diamonds—hers, not mine—  
Nay, by the mother of our Lord himself,  
Or hers or mine, mine now to work my will—  
She shall not have them.'

Saying which she seized,  
And, thro' the casement standing wide for heat,  
Flung them, and down they flash'd, and smote the  
stream.

Then from the smitten surface flash'd, as it were,  
Diamonds to meet them, and they past away.  
Then while Sir Lancelot leant, in half disgust  
At love, life, all things, on the window ledge,  
Close underneath his eyes, and right across

Where these had fallen, slowly past the barge  
Whereon the lily maid of Astolat  
Lay smiling, like a star in blackest night.

But the wild Queen, who saw not, burst away  
To weep and wail in secret: and the barge,  
On to the palace-doorway sliding, paused.  
There two stood arm'd, and kept the door; to  
whom,  
All up the marble stair, tier over tier,  
Were added mouths that gaped, and eyes that  
ask'd  
'What is it?' but that oarsman's haggard face,  
As hard and still as is the face that men  
Shape to their fancy's eye from broken rocks  
On some cliff-side, appall'd them, and they said,  
'He is enchanted, cannot speak—and she,  
Look how she sleeps—the Fairy Queen, so fair!  
Yea, but how pale! what are they? flesh and  
blood?'  
Or come to take the King to fairy land?  
For some do hold our Arthur cannot die,  
But that he passes into fairy land.'

While thus they babbled of the King, the King  
Came girt with knights: then turn'd the tongue-  
less man  
From the half-face to the full eye, and rose  
And pointed to the damsel, and the doors.  
So Arthur bade the meek Sir Percivale

And pure Sir Galahad to uplift the maid ;  
And reverently they bore her into hall.  
Then came the fine Gawain and wonder'd at her,  
And Lancelot later came and mused at her,  
And last the Queen herself and pitied her :  
But Arthur spied the letter in her hand,  
Stoopt, took, brake seal, and read it ; this was all.

‘ Most noble lord, Sir Lancelot of the Lake,  
I, sometime call'd the maid of Astolat,  
Come, for you left me taking no farewell,  
Hither, to take my last farewell of you.  
I loved you, and my love had no return,  
And therefore my true love has been my death.  
And therefore to our lady Guinevere,  
And to all other ladies, I make moan,  
Pray for my soul, and yield me burial.  
Pray for my soul thou too, Sir Lancelot,  
As thou art a knight peerless.’

Thus he read,

And ever in the reading, lords and dames  
Wept, looking often from his face who read  
To hers which lay so silent, and at times,  
So touch'd were they, half-thinking that her lips,  
Who had devised the letter, moved again.

Then freely spoke Sir Lancelot to them all ;  
‘ My lord liege Arthur, and all ye that hear,  
Know that for this most gentle maiden's death  
Right heavy am I ; for good she was and true,

But loved me with a love beyond all love  
In women, whomsoever I have known.  
Yet to be loved makes not to love again ;  
Not at my years, however it hold in youth.  
I swear by truth and knighthood that I gave  
No cause, not willingly, for such a love :  
To this I call my friends in testimony,  
Her brethren, and her father, who himself  
Besought me to be plain and blunt, and use,  
To break her passion, some courtesy  
Against my nature : what I could, I did.  
I left her and I bade her no farewell.  
Tho', had I dreamt the damsel would have died,  
I might have put my wits to some rough use  
And help'd her from herself.'

Then said the Queen  
(Sea was her wrath, yet working after storm)  
'You might at least have done her so much grace,  
Fair lord, as would have help'd her from her  
death.'

He raised his head, their eyes met and hers fell,  
He adding,

'Queen, she would not be content  
Save that I wedded her, which could not be.  
Then might she follow me thro' the world, she  
ask'd ;

It could not be. I told her that her love  
Was but the flash of youth, would darken down  
To rise hereafter in a stiller flame  
Toward one more worthy of her—then would I,

More specially were he, she wedded, poor,  
Estate them with large land and territory  
In mine own realm beyond the narrow seas,  
To keep them in all joyance : more than this  
I could not ; this she would not, and she died.'

## GUINEVERE

AND then they were agreed upon a night  
(When the good King should not be there) to meet  
And part for ever. Passion-pale they met  
And greeted : hands in hands, and eye to eye,  
Low on the border of her couch they sat  
Stammering and staring : it was their last hour,  
A madness of farewells. And Modred brought  
His creatures to the basement of the tower  
For testimony ; and crying with full voice  
'Traitor, come out, ye are trapt at last,' aroused  
Lancelot, who rushing outward lionlike  
Leapt on him, and hurl'd him headlong, and he fell  
Stunn'd, and his creatures took and bare him off  
And all was still : then she, 'The end is come  
And I am shamed for ever' ; and he said,  
'Mine be the shame ; mine was the sin : but rise  
And fly to my strong castle overseas :  
There will I hide thee, till my life shall end,  
There hold thee with my life against the world.'

She answer'd, 'Lancelot, wilt thou hold me so?  
Nay, friend, for we have taken our farewells.  
Would God, that thou couldst hide me from  
myself!

Mine is the shame, for I was wife, and thou  
Unwedded: yet rise now, and let us fly,  
For I will draw me into sanctuary,  
And bide my doom.' So Lancelot got her horse,  
Set her thereon, and mounted on his own,  
And then they rode to the divided way,  
There kiss'd, and parted weeping: for he past,  
Love-loyal to the least wish of the Queen,  
Back to his land; but she to Almesbury  
Fled all night long by glimmering waste and weald  
And heard the Spirits of the waste and weald  
Moan as she fled, or thought she heard then  
moan:

And in herself she moan'd, 'Too late, too late!'  
Till in the cold wind that foreruns the morn,  
A blot in heaven, the Raven, flying high,  
Croak'd, and she thought, 'He spies a field o'  
death;  
For now the Heathen of the Northern Sea,  
Lured by the crimes and frailties of the court,  
Begin to slay the folk, and spoil the land.'

Then on a sudden a cry, 'The King.' She sat  
Stiff-stricken, listening; but when armed feet  
Thro' the long gallery from the outer doors  
Rang coming, prone from off her seat she fell,

And grovell'd with her face against the floor :  
There with her milkwhite arms and shadowy hair  
She made her face a darkness from the King :  
And in the darkness heard his armed feet  
Pause by her ; then came silence, then a voice,  
Monotonous and hollow like a Ghost's  
Denouncing judgment, but, tho' changed, the  
King's.

‘ Liest thou here so low, the child of one  
honour'd, happy, dead before thy shame ?  
Well is it that no child is born of thee.  
The children born of thee are sword and fire,  
Red ruin, and the breaking up of laws,  
The craft of kindred and the Godless hosts  
Of heathen swarming o'er the Northern Sea.

‘ But I was first of all the kings who drew  
The knighthood-errant of this realm and all  
The realms together under me, their Head,  
In that fair order of my Table Round,  
A glorious company, the flower of men,  
To serve as model for the mighty world,  
And be the fair beginning of a time.  
I made them lay their hands in mine and swear  
To reverence the King, as if he were  
Their conscience, and their conscience as their  
King,  
To break the heathen and uphold the Christ,  
To ride abroad redressing human wrongs,

To speak no slander, no, nor listen to it,  
To lead sweet lives in purest chastity,  
To love one maiden only, cleave to her,  
And worship her by years of noble deeds,  
Until they won her; for indeed I knew  
Of no more subtle master under heaven  
Than is the maiden passion for a maid,  
Not only to keep down the base in man,  
But teach high thought, and amiable words  
And courtliness, and the desire of fame,  
And love of truth, and all that makes a man.

‘ Yet think not that I come to urge thy crimes,  
I did not come to curse thee, Guinevere,  
I, whose vast pity almost makes me die  
To see thee, laying there thy golden head,  
My pride in happier summers, at my feet.  
The wrath which forced my thoughts on that  
fierce law,  
The doom of treason and the flaming death,  
(When first I learnt thee hidden here) is past.  
The pang—which while I weigh’d thy heart with  
one  
Too wholly true to dream untruth in thee,  
Made my tears burn—is also past, in part.  
And all is past, the sin is sinn’d, and I,  
Lo! I forgive thee, as Eternal God  
Forgives: do thou for thine own soul the rest.  
But how to take last leave of all I loved?  
O golden hair, with which I used to play

Not knowing ! O imperial-moulded form,  
And beauty such as never woman wore,  
Until it came a kingdom's curse with thee—  
I cannot touch thy lips, they are not mine,  
But Lancelot's : nay, they never were the King's.  
I cannot take thy hand ; that too is flesh,  
And in the flesh thou hast sinn'd : and mine own  
flesh,

Here looking down on thine polluted, cries  
"I loathe thee" : yet not less, O Guinevere,  
For I was ever virgin save for thee,  
My love thro' flesh hath wrought into my life  
So far, that my doom is, I love thee still.  
Let no man dream but that I love thee still.  
Perchance, and so thou purify thy soul,  
And so thou lean on our fair father Christ,  
Hereafter in that world where all are pure  
We two may meet before high God, and thou  
Wilt spring to me, and claim me thine, and know  
I am thine husband—not a smaller soul,  
Nor Lancelot, nor another. Leave me that,  
I charge thee, my last hope. Now must I hence.  
Thro' the thick night I hear the trumpet blow :  
They summon me their King to lead mine hosts  
Far down to that great battle in the west,  
Where I must strike against my sister's son,  
Leagued with the lords of the White Horse and  
knights  
Once mine, and strike him dead, and meet myself  
Death, or I know not what mysterious doom.

And thou remaining here wilt learn the event;  
 But hither shall I never come again,  
 Never lie by thy side, see thee no more,  
 Farewell!'

And while she grovell'd at his feet,  
 She felt the King's breath wander o'er her neck,  
 And, in the darkness o'er her fallen head,  
 Perceived the waving of his hands that blest.

### MORTE D'ARTHUR

THEN saw they how there hove a dusky barge,  
 Dark as a funeral scarf from stem to stern,  
 Beneath them; and descending they were ware,  
 That all the decks were dense with stately forms  
 Black-stoled, black-hooded, like a dream—by  
 these

Three Queens with crowns of gold—and from  
 them rose

A cry that shiver'd to the tingling stars,  
 And, as it were one voice, an agony  
 Of lamentation, like a wind, that shrills  
 All night in a waste land, where no one comes,  
 Or hath come, since the making of the world.

Then murmur'd Arthur, 'Place me in the barge,'  
 And to the barge they came. There those three  
 Queens

Put forth their hands, and took the King, and wept.

But she, that rose the tallest of them all  
And fairest, laid his head upon her lap,  
And loosed the shatter'd casque, and chafed his hands,

And call'd him by his name, complaining loud,  
And dropping bitter tears against his brow  
Striped with dark blood : for all his face was white  
And colourless, and like the wither'd moon  
Smote by the fresh beam of the springing east ;  
And all his greaves and cuisses dash'd with drops  
Of onset ; and the light and lustrous curls—  
That made his forehead like a rising sun  
High from the daïs-throne—were parch'd with dust ;

Or, clotted into points and hanging loose,  
Mix'd with the knightly growth that fringed his lips.

So like a shatter'd column lay the King ;  
Not like that Arthur who, with lance in rest,  
From spur to plume a star of tournament,  
Shot thro' the lists at Camelot, and charged  
Before the eyes of ladies and of kings.

Then loudly cried the bold Sir Bedivere,  
' Ah ! my Lord Arthur, whither shall I go ?  
Where shall I hide my forehead and my eyes ?  
For now I see the true old times are dead,  
When every morning brought a noble chance,  
And every chance brought out a noble knight.

Such times have been not since the light that led  
The holy Elders with the gift of myrrh.  
But now the whole ROUND TABLE is dissolved  
Which was an image of the mighty world ;  
And I, the last, go forth companionless,  
And the days darken round me, and the years,  
Among new men, strange faces, other minds.'

And slowly answer'd Arthur from the barge :  
'The old order changeth, yielding place to new,  
And God fulfils himself in many ways,  
Lest one good custom should corrupt the world.  
Comfort thyself : what comfort is in me ?  
I have lived my life, and that which I have done  
May He within himself make pure ! but thou,  
If thou shouldst never see my face again,  
Pray for my soul. More things are wrought by  
prayer

Than this world dreams of. Wherefore, let thy  
voice

Rise like a fountain for me night and day.  
For what are men better than sheep or goats  
That nourish a blind life within the brain,  
If, knowing God, they lift not hands of prayer  
Both for themselves and those who call them  
friend ?

For so the whole round earth is every way  
Bound by gold chains about the feet of God.  
But now farewell. I am going a long way  
With these thou seëst—if indeed I go—  
(For all my mind is clouded with a doubt)

To the island-valley of Avilion ;  
Where falls not hail, or rain, or any snow,  
Nor ever wind blows loudly ; but it lies  
Deep-meadow'd, happy, fair with orchard-lawns  
And bowery hollows crown'd with summer sea,  
Where I will heal me of my grievous wound.'

So said he, and the barge with oar and sail  
Moved from the brink, like some full-breasted  
swan

That, fluting a wild carol ere her death,  
Ruffles her pure cold plume, and takes the flood  
With swarthy webs. Long stood Sir Bedivere  
Revolving many memories, till the hull  
Look'd one black dot against the verge of dawn,  
And on the mere the wailing died away.





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Selections from Tennyson

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